



Macdougall (to his new fourth wife). "THE MEENISTER DOESNA APPROVE O' MY MARRYIN' AGAIN, AN' SAE YOUNG A WIFE TOO. BUT, AS I TELL'T HIM, I CANNA BE AYE BURYIN', BURYIN'."

#### LOOKING FORWARD; OR, THE TOO-MIGHTY DOLLAR.

MESSRS. SHEFFE & Son beg to announce that arrangements for the 1918 season of excursions to the United States are now complete. The first boat will leave Southampton on May 1st, and others, either from that port or Liverpool, at regular intervals of a few days throughout the summer months until August 31st.

Since the end of the last season so many more unique English treasures have found their way to the United States that Messrs. SHEFFE are anticipating an immense increase in the number of tourists, since it has become a habit of their countrymen to value only that which they have to travel abroad to see.

Among the special new objects of interest in America which the 1918 circular tours will embrace are:-

SHAKESPEARE's cottage from Stratford-on-Avon, now the property of WILLIAM K. MUNGER, the cart-grease

king, and recently successfully re-erected at Mungersville, N.Y.

MILTON's cottage from Chalfont St. Giles, now the property of HIRAM J. KINDERFOLL, of Chicago, recently successfully re-erected in the grounds of his mansion in that city.

A priceless collection of WHISTLER's etchings, first state, presented by the Artist to Queen VICTORIA. Now in the New York Museum.

Fifty-three first folios, all collected by Mr. PIERPONT MORGAN and exhibited through glass in the wholesale folio department of that virtuoso's famous library. Visitors are allowed to file by, but no one must stop.

The MS. of Magna Charta, now the property of ANDREW CANNIMANN, the proprietor of the famous rye whisky which bears his name, to be seen in the window of his chief office in Detroit. It will be remembered that this historic document, when it came into the market last year, was made an object of keen competition among

American collectors, the British Museum not being in a position to offer more than £25.

Assorted samples of VELASQUEZ, from twenty English collections, now the property of ESAU W. SMITHSON, the white-lead prince, whose mansion on 87th Avenue is one of the wonders of the world.

The MSS. of Mr. MEREDITH's *Egoist*, Mr. HARDY's *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Mr. SWINBURNE's *Poems and Ballads*, first series, J. R. GREEN's *Short History of the English People*, Mr. KIPLING's *Seven Seas*, and CARLYLE's *Past and Present*, which are now exhibited in the Mechanics' Institute at Poker Flat.

These are the principal new acquisitions since the Autumn of 1917; but it must be understood that others are crossing the Atlantic, East to West, every week.

"French shocks of earthquake have been experienced in central Germany."

*Japan Daily Herald.*

Undoubtedly a *casus belli*.

## THE DETACHMENT OF PRENDERBY.

He DISCUSSES THE REFORM OF THE LORDS.

I FOUND him in one of his most judicial and ponderous moods. "I have been studying," he said, "the full report of Lord ROSEBERY's Select Committee, and I come to the conclusion that they have left the root of the evil practically untouched. So far from killing the snake that is spoiling his Paradise, the noble Lowlander who occupied the chair has not even scotched him, unless the attempt to mollify him with soft airs upon the bagpipes is to count as scotching.

"To begin at the beginning—and it looks as if the Select Committee had started further on, like the Irishman who was for omitting the first half-dozen lessons in the French language because he had heard that they were the stiffest—it is not a bad plan when you are considering the reform of anything to ask yourself what is the actual object of that thing's existence. Now there are two possible arguments for the existence of a Second Chamber:—(1) That it is wanted to carry out the Will of the People; and therefore, if necessary, to protect them against their own elected representatives; (2) that it is wanted to guard the best interests of the People, whether they wish it or not; and therefore, if necessary, to protect them against themselves.

"As for No. 1, I have a profound contempt for the so-called Will of the People—"

("*Vox Dei!*" I said, crossing myself.)

"—and my contempt," continued PRENDERBY unmoved, "is clearly shared by the Constitution, which allows a Government, Tory or Radical, to keep in office long after it has apparently ceased to represent popular feeling. And, anyhow, even if the Will of the People were worth respecting, instead of being a thing which is alternately described as a Divine Utterance and a Pendulum, a Lord of Parliament has no better power of gauging the country's feelings at any given moment than is enjoyed by the Man in the Street.

"Indeed, if it were the function of a Second Chamber simply to discover, and automatically endorse, the Will of the People, then the ideal Senate should consist of nothing but Election Agents. So I think we may dispose of theory No. 1 as unfit for serious contemplation.

"Remains No. 2. And for the purposes of a Chamber that has to look after the true interests of the nation, *populo volente nolente*, you need the absolutely best men that are to be found. Does an hereditary Peerage, and it alone, produce this type? It has, I grant, one great advantage: it is independent of the shifting pressure of popular demands at the polls. But a system of Chance—names taken at random from a directory and drawn out of a hat—would equally assure this desirable independence. And it is only one of many features required in a Second Chamber; yet it is the sole one that is guaranteed (and not always that) by the hereditary system.

"This system is admittedly rotten, and the Select Committee don't deny it. But they make no attempt to provide a decent alternative. The furthest they go is to say: 'There are at present about 590 of us. Not every Peer is the depositary of the Higher Wisdom. We can only be sure of 330 as answering to this description. The rest had better go.'"

"But," I put in, "you forget the generous inclusion of no fewer than four Life-Lords (exclusive of the Bench) to be created annually, with a limit of forty."

"True," replied PRENDERBY; "I had forgotten that bold and revolutionary proposal. But what are four or

even forty amongst all that multitude? Is this their notion of correcting poor blood, however blue, by an infusion of good blood, however red?

"And, even so, the selection of three out of every four of these is to be confined to the Services—naval, military, bureaucratic, diplomatic, colonial—and to M.P.s of long sitting. So that, outside these official and political spheres, from the vast resources of intelligence and experience which happen to be engaged in other useful fields of activity (exclusive of Church and Bench), only one Commoner (all told) is to be elected *per annum* to the Upper Chamber on the pure ground of efficiency—Lord ROSEBERY's own word in the old days. And when their number reaches the overwhelming figure 10 we shall have to wait for somebody to die.

"And you will please notice that any Peer who, by distinction or perseverance or good conduct, has risen to the higher ranks in these Services which I have named—an Admiral or a Lieutenant-General, for instance—is to become *ipso facto* a Lord of Parliament. There are to be 130 of these in addition to the 30 elevated commoners drawn from official or political sources. Well, I have nothing but respect, as you know, for the Public Service, though I am told that there are also unofficial methods of serving one's country; but I doubt if a dear old Admiral (God bless 'em all!), who has spent his life on the high seas, would, even if born to the Peerage, be the best possible authority on matters of domestic legislation—the only kind that he would be expected to handle, since his own department is catered for elsewhere."

I hesitated to dam the flow of my friend's pellucid eloquence, but I felt constrained to enter a protest somewhere. "I half fear," said I, "that you are congenitally lacking in veneration for Nobility of Birth."

"I entertain no rooted objection," he replied, "to a Peer as such. *Le snobisme à rebours* is just as contemptible as the more usual kind. I would not permit any man's birth, however exalted, to stand in his way. And I consider that the best suggestion made by the Select Committee was the proposal to allow ordinary Peers who have never sat in the Upper House to sit in the Commons, if they can get themselves elected to it. A sprinkling of this element might have a salutary and humanizing effect upon the Lower Chamber, and tend to keep young fellows like Lord WINTERTON in check. And I would even admit a few of them into the Upper House, where, of course, a higher standard of deliberative intelligence is demanded."

"And have you any scheme of your own?" I ventured.

"Ah," replied PRENDERBY, on a note of extreme modesty, "I have never specialised in creative, or even re-creative, art. Nor have I given, like the Select Committee, the best part of a year and a-half to the solution of this conundrum. But, speaking always as a child, I should like to see the members of the Second Chamber selected in the same way as the members of the Privy Council. I have noticed that the best men sooner or later drift into this Order. Or, better still perhaps, the Privy Council might itself be responsible for the selection, making it a point of honour to carry out this high duty without fear or favour or political prejudice, and solely on the ground of efficiency—Lord ROSEBERY's own word once more."

"It sounds simple enough," I said.

"All the best things are quite simple," said PRENDERBY.

O. S.



"ONE WORD MORE."

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT (*to Central African fauna*). "HALF A MOMENT, WHILE I JUST THROW THIS OFF, AND THEN I'M WITH YOU."

about 1000 ft. above sea level



## RECIPROCITY.

Dummy (consulting the score—while her partner considers his call). "I MIGHT PERHAPS MENTION, PARTNER, THAT ONE TRICK IN NO-TRUMPS GIVES US GAME."

[Partner goes no trumps.]

Third hand. "AND I MIGHT POSSIBLY VENTURE TO SUGGEST, PARTNER, THAT IF YOU HAPPEN TO PLAY A CLUB IT GIVES US THE RUBBER."

## A PHANTASY OF THE 'PHONE.

[Telephone operators have been instructed by the Post Office to say "Please" and generally display the utmost politeness to subscribers in future. The latter, we are sure, will not be outdone in courtesy.]

*Operator (answering call that has been waiting five minutes).* Hallo! Please pardon my saying "Hallo" in that familiar off-hand manner, but you have to open the conversation somehow. I hope I haven't kept you waiting very long.

*Subscriber (suavely and politely).* Oh, not a mere nothing; not more than ten or fifteen minutes at the most. I hope I haven't disturbed you?

O. Not at all, please. Quite delighted to have the privilege of attending to your instrument. What number can I have the pleasure of obtaining for you?

S. Well, if it is not greatly inconveniencing you, you can hitch me on —ahem! you can connect me with 77902 on the London Wall Exchange.

O. Delighted, I am sure. Will you be so good, please, as to hold the line for the space of a minute or two

whilst I communicate your desires to the lady at the other Exchange? . . . Wretched weather, isn't it?

S. Oh, horrible; but still, you know, when one has a charming conversation such as I am having with a delightful personality, one forgets all about the weather.

O. It's really too nice of you to say so. . . . You're through to your number now.

\* \* \* \* \*

S. (a couple of minutes later). Excuse me, my dear young lady, but you've put me through to the wrong number.

O. No, really? How culpably negligent of me. It's enough to make you very angry indeed. I could easily forgive you if you were to say a strong word. But I'm sure you are incapable of it.

S. Well, well, try again. Better luck next time. It's double-seven-nine-o-two Wall I want.

O. Thank you. (A pause.) I regret exceedingly to have to inform you that that number is engaged, please.

S. Bless you. (Replaces receiver and says something else.)

## TO A VIOLET.

[By a student of science who has been informed that "a perceived quality of an object —e.g. the scent of a flower—is a psychical state which exists only when it is experienced."]

Violet, does your odour rare  
Really scent the summer air?  
Or does it, as some suppose,  
Merely stimulate my nose?

Atoms light on airy wing  
From your fragrant bosom spring,  
Touch the nostril, stir the nerve,  
Reach my brain till I "observe."  
Sweet "emotions" next arise,  
Tears of joy suffuse my eyes;  
Memory brings me back the past,  
Hinting where I smelt you last.

"Psychic dispositions" find  
Place in my "subconscious mind."  
At the last, a "sense of smell"  
Penetrates some brainy cell.

Little violet, prithee say,  
What you do when I'm away:  
What about your power of scent?  
Is your odour permanent?  
Are the poets wrong who swear  
That your fragrance fills the air?  
Truly now! Does scent exist?  
Tell a puzzled scientist!

### THE "USE AND NEED" OF RELATIONS.

"How do you write an anonymous letter?" I asked, as I chewed my pencil.

"Sir," said Miss MIDDLETON, "or Madam. Beware, before it is too late. What have you done with the canary's cage? I know all. And you sign it 'THREE-FINGERED DICK.'"

"I shall sign mine 'HAMSTRUNG HERBERT,' I think. Must I do it like that, though? It isn't a bit what I wanted to say."

"What did you want to say, and who's it to?"

"My relations," I sighed. "And it's about Christmas presents."

"Oh, what are you giving them? Do tell me. Guess what I'm giving ANNE. Oh no, you mustn't—I've just remembered what it is."

"You don't understand," I said, rather annoyed. "It isn't what I'm giving them, but what they ought to give me."

"Relations never give the right things, anyhow."

"Exactly. Hence the anonymous letter. Dear Madam,—A friend wishes to warn you that your favourite nephew wants a —— And so on. That might fetch them." "What does her favourite nephew want?"

"I want—oh, everything. But what I really want," I added with a rush, "is a set of waistcoat buttons, and a copper kettle, and a music-cabinet for keeping boots in."

"That seems reasonable enough," said Miss MIDDLETON, after a moment's reflection. "If I had been your aunt, that is just what I should have thought of. Probably."

"I don't really want the music-cabinet," I explained. "But everybody tells me I do; and I know that if I had it I should get into the way of keeping my boots there, and leaving the rolls on the top of the pianola as usual. So I mentioned it. What I really want in that line, of course, is a music-stool. You see, when I finish playing a piece, I want to twirl round and say, 'Isn't that jolly?' to the people who are listening. And they say, 'Awfully.' With a great high-backed chair you can't do that, and sometimes they forget to say anything."

"I always say, 'A charming note that last one, yes.'"

"And then I like them to see my back when I'm playing, because of the expression. I don't mean that I put the expression in with my back,

but that that is where it shows. . . . Well, then we come to the waistcoat buttons."

"What sort of buttons do you want?"

"I don't mind a bit," I said. "But here I am, getting most frightfully old, and nobody has ever given me a set of waistcoat buttons in my life. It's scandalous."

"You should buy a bone set, with a waistcoat stitched on."

"I have often. But that doesn't count. You must have them given to you. Who do you think ought to give them to me? I thought a cousin."

"It would come rather nicely from a cousin. Have you any?"

I took out my pocket-book.

"Six first, twelve second, and seventeen third cousins."

"That makes eighty-one altogether," said Miss MIDDLETON, after a short silence.

"I always make it come to thirty-five. Are you sure you're right?"

"Eighty-one. That would be thirteen and a half to a button. Why, they could do you a set of diamond ones easily."

"Some of them I have never seen," I said. "They might stand out for mother-of-pearl. But, as I say, I shouldn't mind that."

"Well, I think it's disgraceful of them. It isn't as though they could pretend that they didn't know your size."

"The truth is, I think, that they aren't quite in touch with each other. There is a feeling among them that *something* should be done, only they want somebody to give them a lead. . . . That's why I thought I would," I added.

"Well," said Miss MIDDLETON, "there still remains the copper kettle."

"The copper kettle. I want that for keeping my breakfast warm. At present the hot water always goes out—gets cold, I mean—before I'm up. If I had one of those kettles with dents all round it and a wick underneath it would be so much pleasanter. Who do you think ought to give me that?"

"That's really what you'd call a useful present, isn't it?"

"It can be made very pretty if they do the dents right. They call them Yuletide gifts in the shops."

"But I mean it would be good for your health to have one."

"Indirectly I suppose it would. Though I've never heard anything against cold tea."

"Because useful presents which

are good for the health are generally given by aunts."

"I have some aunts," I said.

"It would come best from a great-aunt," said Miss MIDDLETON doubtfully.

I referred to my pocket-book.

"I'm very sorry," I said, "but we are quite out of great-aunts. We have a very good line in sisters-in-law. They think a lot of your health."

"Haven't you an old nurse?"

"I haven't a nurse at all."

"Then it will have to be an ordinary aunt. The one you gave the nicest present to last year. How many have you?"

"Two. Exactly two."

"There you are, then; the other can give you the music-stool. Now then, what did you give them?"

I coughed uneasily.

"It's—it's a little difficult to tell you," I said. "It's—er—I could explain to a man easily enough. I mean—of course—well . . . Well, there's Aunt MAGGIE up in Aberdeen."

"Yes?"

"Yes. Well, I gave her one of those—you know, oblong things, with sparkling things on them."

"Sort of brilliants?"

"Sort of, yes. And there was some lettering on it. It was, Wishing you the old, old wish, A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Something like a Christmas-card—only . . . well, yes."

"I see," said Miss MIDDLETON gravely. "And Aunt JANE?"

"Aunt JANE in Edinburgh. Well, hers was the same sort of thing, only it had on it, Wishing you the old, old wish, A Happy Christmas—a Happy Christmas—and a—and a Merry New Year."

"I see," said Miss MIDDLETON again.

Of course I quite see what she sees, but I think she's wrong. Who ever heard of a nephew giving his aunt a music-stool? She couldn't twirl round properly on it to begin with. All the same, I think I shall leave out the aunts when I send the anonymous letter round, and concentrate on the cousins. Eighty-one cousins—they want pulling together a bit, and HAMSTRUNG HERBERT is the man to do it. A.A.M.

### Things they manage better in France.

"The door was opened by a footman struggling into his coat with a handful of faggots in his arms."—From *Madame Waddington's Reminiscences*.

## CHARIVARIA.

THE young Crown Prince of SERVIA is still bellicose. "I will fight my father, if necessary," he is reported to have said. He is a dear boy. We look forward with pleasure to further news from the Pantomime of War.

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Austria, according to the Vienna correspondent of the *Petit Parisien*, is to give Servia and Montenegro "a lesson in the Spring." What is taking place at present, we suppose, then, is the preliminary Crouch.

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A general Arbitration Treaty between Brazil and Argentine has been signed and exchanged. Such a treaty, we understand, would have been entered into long ago had it not been that the Republics were under the impression that it might prevent their going to war with one another.

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Referring to the treatment meted out to certain Suffragettes at the Albert Hall, one of their number states: "We will not suffer these things in silence." We have sometimes wondered whether the notoriously quiet methods of the Suffragettes are really advisable, and we are interested to hear that there is now to be a change of policy.

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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has never been found lacking in personal courage, and now he has delivered himself of the following message: "I am not an enthusiastic advocate of woman suffrage, because I do not regard it as a very important matter." Still, this is not so daring as it sounds, for TEDDY knows that he will soon be beyond the reach of Suffragettes, and safe among the wild beasts of Africa.

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"However much they may be entitled to consultation and to give us such advice and assistance as they can," said Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, speaking at Millwall of the House of Lords, "they ought not to be allowed to stand for good in the way of Liberal measures." "Stand for good" was surely a slip.

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While golfing on the Edgbaston Links last week, the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE hit the ball hard with his niblick. The ball jumped into the air and dropped into his Lordship's right-hand pocket. Since this fact became known Lord ALVERSTONE, we are informed, has been inundated with proposals from Music-Halls offering fabulous sums if he will give



*She. "MOST IMPROBABLE. THERE'S BEEN A LAPSE OF TWO YEARS SINCE THE PREVIOUS ACT--AND THEY'VE GOT THE SAME SERVANT!"*

a few turns of this sort. To his Lordship's credit, none of these offers has been accepted.

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A staggering blow has been dealt at the popularity of football in the Midlands by a decision given at Glossop last week. It was then held that it was illegal to attack a referee, and a man was fined ten shillings for the offence.

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During the past twelve months there have been only twenty-two cremations in Birmingham as compared with thirty-two in the previous year, and the work of the crematorium has been carried on at a loss. It is proposed that with a view to attracting customers the scale of fees should be revised, and reduced rates are to be offered to large parties.

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"Lord Carrington," says *The Express*, "spent most of yesterday at

the Board of Agriculture, where he held a reception for farmers, at which all their grievances were discussed." Seeing that less than twenty-four hours were devoted to this entertainment, the word "all" is surely something of an exaggeration? The weather alone should have taken a week.

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The POSTMASTER - GENERAL has ordered Telephone Girls to say "Please"—and they are doing it. Not even the Government's bitterest enemy will grudge them this small success.

"The intentions of Mr. Runciman, the Education Minister, were good—but we all know Dante's line about good intentions."

*The Standard.*

But how few know Dr. JOHNSON'S famous inscription over BOSWELL'S front door: "All hope abandon ye who enter here!"

## SERAPHIC "SOUL-BODIES."

THE new theory of Life after Death, recently expounded by Mr. FOURNIER D'ALBE, B.Sc., Secretary of the Dublin Society of Psychical Research, to an audience of Spiritualists in Suffolk Street, has naturally excited considerable interest in both worlds. Mr. D'ALBE, if correctly reported by the Press, maintains that disembodied souls, or "soul-bodies," inhabit a realm of the earth-atmosphere extending upwards for two-hundred miles, and, subsisting as they do entirely on sun-rays, require and possess no digestive organs, and have no need to compete for existence. Consequently he holds that they are all "engaged only in cultivating the higher virtues of Justice, Kindness, and Sympathy."

Mr. Punch, feeling that it would be rash to accept these views—even on such scientific authority as Mr. FOURNIER D'ALBE's—without some confirmation, has instructed his own Psychic Medium to place himself under the control of any floating soul-bodies within the two-hundred-mile radius that might desire to express an opinion on the subject.

As will appear from the following notes, automatically taken by the Medium himself in the trance condition, the séance proved remarkably successful :

The First Soul-body would rather not give the name by which it was known in life, but furnished some clue to its identity by mentioning that the colour of its beard had been a good deal exaggerated. Knew about Mr. D'ALBE's lecture, but was not

actually present. Had tried to get in, but only floating-room for about four million souls. Hoped he would choose the Albert Hall next time. Was in the dome there last Saturday week, and deeply interested—though it pained him to see so many charming ladies losing their heads. Yes, ever since he had first entered the earth-atmosphere had been ardent sympathiser with the Women's Cause. Would like to see some reform of the Marriage laws, which at present placed a wife too much at the mercy of her husband. Was decidedly of opinion that no doors should be closed to women. Disapproved of flats as domestic dwellings—not a decent-sized cupboard in any of them!

A Soul-body, describing itself as having formerly belonged to the late JUDGE JEFFREYS, said it had read an account of Mr. D'ALBE's address in the local films. Mr. D'ALBE was a most ingenious honest gentleman, and many of his statements were fairly correct.

Marvellous, indeed, that he should know so much as he did! He was somewhat out, however, in his estimate of the extent of the radius, which, precisely reckoned, was not above 173 miles 3 furlongs. But that was a small matter. As to himself, was desirous of seeing a more humane treatment of Criminals. Would have them reformed not by imprisonment, but kindness. Capital punishment ineffectual and barbarous, and should be abolished forthwith. Still hung about the Assize Courts occasionally, but horrified at abuse of cross-examination by certain counsellors, and by severity of sentences from the Bench. Had more than once felt constrained to protest—but took nothing by his motion, except that Judge

complained of icy draught in court, and ordered all windows to be closed. Had no digestive organs—but heart larger than ever it had been.

The Soul-body of the MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS said it had been present at the Suffolk Street meeting. Thought M. D'ALBE extremely sympathetic, and had been moved to tears by some of his so eloquent periods. All that, for example, of the persecution endured by those poor ghosts who, from motives of purest benevolence, ventured to become visible to mortals. How touching, and how true! She who was speaking had, only the other evening, undergone an experience of the most disagreeable! She had conceived it her duty to appear to a certain of her descendants, now dwelling in the quarter of Soho, and warn him solemnly that the *pâté de Périgord* he was about to partake of had so deteriorated as to have become



*Kindly, but short-sighted, old gentleman, dropping coin in apple-woman's cup of tea. "THERE, THERE. BLESS MY SOUL! GET YOURSELF A CUP OF COFFEE."*

positively unwholesome. "Ptomaines?" She knew not that word; but it was always possible. Well, she appeared, then. Figure that her ungrateful kinsman, so far from appreciating the attention, had permitted himself to fling a small jar of French mustard through her head! But if she no longer possessed organs of digestion she could still feel for those who did. Was it not desolating to reflect that it was becoming almost impossible for poor human beings to procure food or drink which had not been adulterated? Believe her, so long as such unprincipled practices went unpunished except by fines, Society would suffer! On being questioned as to whether she agreed or not with Mr. D'ALBE that the Soul-body might become visible in ultra-violet light, would only say that she trusted he was mistaken, as it could not but be unbecoming to the complexion of any person of quality.

Control was next assumed by a Soul-body who



*Herbert (who has had a threepenny-bit given him by his mother for the collection). "ALL RIGHT, DAD, I'LL PAY."*

announced himself as GUY FAWKES. Admitted that he had not followed the proceedings of Parliament very closely of late, so could not say when it was likely to be dissolved. Was much more interested in the preservation of ancient monuments. Thought it a grievous scandal that so many of our historic buildings should be permitted to vanish with scarce a trace left to show where they had once stood! Had endeavoured to save the Great Wheel at Earl's Court, and sundry stately palaces on a spot called Shepherd's Bush; but his efforts had failed. All his efforts *did*, somehow. Had been shamefully entreated not a great while since by a pestilent manufacturer in the Midlands. The vile dog was bent on overthrowing a colossal chimney of brick that had been a noted landmark for nigh upon a century; actually undermining it at the base! He himself had been at great pains to prevent so foul a deed—but all his hauntings and rappings and groanings had been to no purpose, for the fellow had got him exorcised! An unconscionable freedom to take with any gentleman's soul! But what, to him, was most intolerable, it had been performed by a minister of some Nonconformist sect!

In token of his concern for the safety of the public, he earnestly desired that letters be dispatched to the authorities in every city warning them to keep good watch. For it was within his knowledge that sundry mean traders had—and that no longer ago than the

beginning of last month!—collected vast store of combustibles and explosives—ay, and masks withal! With what fell purpose he, being wholly ignorant of their secret bloody designs, would not take upon him so much as to conjecture; but this he might say: on his conscience he believed that *some* ill plot was toward!

It is hardly necessary to point out how entirely these communications support Mr. FOURNIER D'ALBE'S theories. Still less to assure him that the Medium in question is a gentleman who is absolutely incapable of such a liberty as pulling anybody's leg. At all events, *Mr. Punch* hopes so.

F. A.

#### MR. PUNCH'S PAGEANT.

His compliments to his friends, and *Mr. Punch* does not mind saying again, for it is quite true, that he is going to hold an Exhibition of himself. He has now decided to be in the movement and call it a Pageant. It will be distinguished from ordinary pageants both in other respects and by the fact that it is to keep still. Nevertheless, in point of sentiment, it will be the most moving of spectacles. It opens on Saturday, January 2nd, 1909, at the Leicester Galleries, Leicester Square, and proposes to stay there all the month. *Mr. Punch* takes this opportunity of expressing his sincere thanks to many kind people for the loan of original drawings, manuscripts, letters and other precious relics associated with his career.



### THOSE MECHANICAL TOYS.

*Fond Mamma. "WHAT! BROKEN ALREADY? IF I'D GIVEN IT TO YOUR FATHER INSTEAD, IT WOULD HAVE KEPT HIM QUIET FOR HOURS!"*

### CHRISTMAS COOKERY. SOME SEASONABLE SUGGESTIONS.

#### I.—CARDS.

THESE form a welcome and dainty addition to the Christmas morning breakfast. To prepare, take two plump robins (boned, so as to stand in impossible attitudes), a church-tower with bells, and holly to taste. Season the whole with a couple of cheap rhymes, and sprinkle thickly with frost. Serve in half-sheet of notepaper, "With best wishes from all at Homeleigh," enclose in envelope, and garnish with pink stamp.

A more economical version of the above omits the Best Wishes, and garnishes with green stamp.

#### II.—WAITS.

Fill four throaty baritones and a bass with either beer or whisky, as preferred. Add a conductor, two choir-boys, and a hazy recollection of *Good King Wenceslas*. Mix well, and set aside to simmer. As soon as slight fizzling noise makes itself audible, cold water should be freely poured over the whole till this ceases.

#### III.—ANNUALS.

These, though conventionally asso-

ciated with Christmas, most frequently make their actual appearance at table towards the beginning of autumn. The chief ingredients are advertisements *ad lib.*, which may be rendered fairly palatable by a judicious admixture of pretty well any old stuff you have left over. Add a seasoning of turkeys and huntballs, and colour as attractively as possible. Served with special Presentation Plates, this economical trifle will be readily swallowed.

#### IV.—HUMORISTS.

These are certain to be in great demand by hostesses who require some inexpensive little extra to set before their guests at the Christmas dinner. As a relish to plum-pudding and mince-pies nothing is so popular as a nicely turned-out humorist. The most usual kind, more than sufficient for a party of twenty persons, is generally stuffed with chestnuts, and moistened with sweet champagne or a little fruity port. Great care should be exercised in serving, as some humorists are apt to fall flat when brought to table, in which case the entire effect is ruined.

#### V.—THEATRICALS.

The Maugham shape, very popular just now, is usually made with a flavour of diluted Hawtrey. For smaller parties the Hubert-Henry is recommended. The author's fee is either added at the last moment or left out altogether.

From a College of Preceptors' Junior Examination Paper:—

"Describe in ten or twelve lines of French . . . the examining superintendent."

Here goes:—

"Il a le nez rouge. Ses pieds sont trop grandes. Ces sont aussi grandes que M. le Smith Major's. Cela dit quelque chose. Pourquoi a-t-il la tête balde? Je ne sais pas. Je ne l'aime pas. Maintenant je stopperai."

#### The League-long Roller.

From an advertisement of Blackpool:

"THE FINEST SEA IN EUROPE.  
Flowing against the Promenade daily; three miles in extent."

This is a modest understatement. Readers will be glad to know that these three miles of boundless European ocean perform twice daily.

"He had been striking matches, and as there were valuable horses in the stable Bailie Smail said there might have been a fire."

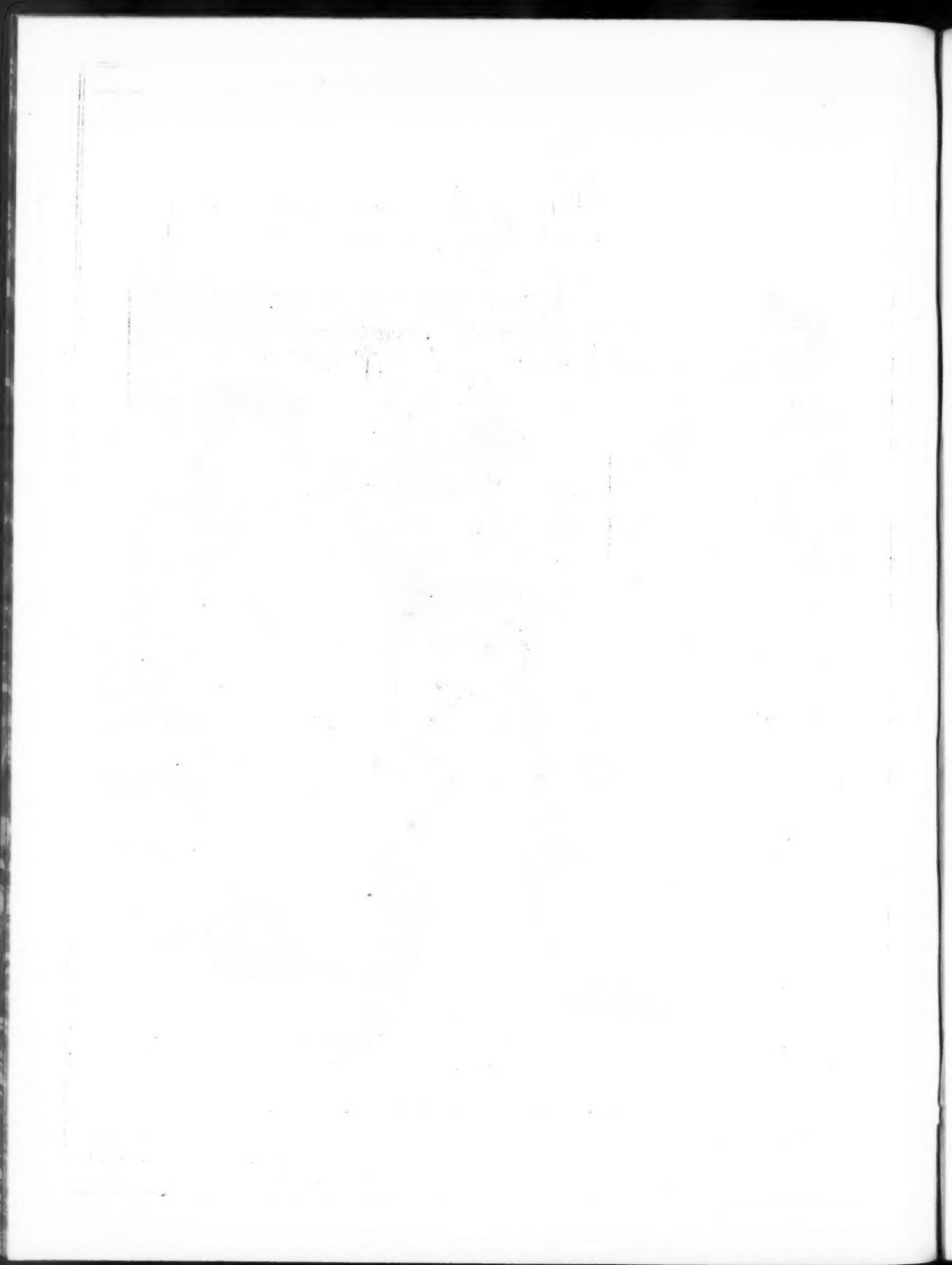
*The Border Standard.*

These fiery steeds are very inflammable.



### BOILING OVER WITH APATHY.

PRIME MINISTER. "INSULT ME SIX TIMES MORE, AND I WON'T BE ANSWERABLE FOR MYSELF. AND HEAVEN KNOWS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I APPEALED TO MY FRIEND HERE, WHO ALREADY HAS GREAT DIFFICULTY IN CONTROLLING HIS INDIGNATION."



**ESS~~E~~NCE OF PARLIAMENT.**

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

*House of Commons, Monday, December 7.*—No one looking round House whilst Questions were going forward would imagine we are in throes of Ministerial crisis, that presently the PREMIER will make a statement affecting existence of one of principal measures of the Session, possibly involving fate of the Government. Benches only half filled. Gaps on those whereon across the Table Ministers and ex-Ministers bend upon each other affectionate regard. Amongst absentees at the moment were the PREMIER and PRINCE ARTHUR. By time Questions were over and Orders of Day reached, the Benches filled up, and a sprinkling of Peers was seen in gallery over the clock. Still there was room for all comers.

When at length Education Bill was called on and House resolved itself into Committee, there was a hush of expectancy; but nothing approaching that intense, almost breathless attitude of waiting and listening familiar in ordinary crises. The method studiously adopted of finally disposing of the Bill contributed to absence of excitement. Last Friday PREMIER gave notice that he would to-day move that the order for Committee



"If I were to attend the right hon. gentleman's public dinners, and he were to attend mine, these entertainments would become even more popular than they are." (Loud laughter.)

Mr. Balfour, Dec. 9.

stage should be read and discharged. This a procedure into which it would be possible to import some passion evoking demonstrations and counter-demonstrations. On reflection, PREMIER perceived a better way, more consonant with his desire to avoid anything like a scene. When the cheers that greeted his appearance at the Table subsided, he, addressing the CHAIRMAN, remarked in quiet tones, "I rise, Sir, for the purpose of moving that you do now leave the Chair."

One of the most commonplace procedures of a day's sitting. It means that the business immediately in hand shall be postponed for a day or a week, according to the most convenient arrangement of business.

The PREMIER having made an end of speaking, PRINCE ARTHUR following in brief speech set in minor key skilfully struck, Mr. EMMOTT left the Chair. The SPEAKER came in and the next business on the Orders was called on.

Though no formal declaration was made, everyone knew that with the emptying of the Chair at the Table the life went out of the Education Bill—

A Bill which there were none to praise  
And very few to love.

The Licensing Bill, done to death in the House of Lords, had, as FIRZ MAURICE remarked, a fine funeral. The Education Bill died by automatic pro-

cess. It was not permitted even to give an audible last gasp. Nor did friendly hand close its eyes. It simply disappeared from the scene as part of the working of an ordinary business procedure. The PREMIER's formal motion "that the CHAIRMAN do now leave the Chair" was agreed to without debate or division, and since Mr. EMMOTT will never come back to preside over Committee on the Education Bill the measure is dead.

No flowers, by request.

*Business done.*—Education Bill smothered in its cradle.

*Tuesday.*—LOULU, who has given us a new dining-room, has added a phrase to the Parliamentary vocabulary. Heckled this afternoon by Brother BOB, who wanted to know why a room should be allotted to the private use of the Chairman of Welsh Liberal Members whilst Scotland had none, the First Commissioner cautiously replied that he did not know on what, "if any," principle his predecessors acted when they made the allotment. Here BOWLES JUNIOR nipped in with enquiry on what principle the allotment was continued?

"On the general principle of continuity of policy," LOULU answered, with a glance at the FOREIGN MINISTER who chanced to be in his place.

Brother BOB lengthening the catechism by two other questions, LOULU, regarding him with fraternal



"A FINE FUNERAL" FOR THE LICENSING BILL.  
(Lord F-tzm-r-ce.)

smile, remarked, "Perhaps I had better have family notice of any further enquiry."

"Family notice" is good, implying among other conveniences a saving of public time. True, opportunity for use of expedient is not so wide in present House as it was in its predecessor. The electoral earthquake of 1906 shattered many family connections. Still there are cases where brothers, or father and son, have been returned, and the practice of giving notice across the family breakfast-table of intention to put a question would in several cases—the brothers WASON for example—be a convenience.

*Business done.*—Irish Land Bill read a second time.

*Thursday.*—When in the Chair Mr. LOWTHER never for a moment loses his head. Ready for any sudden emergency, for all unexpected turns of debate. This makes more striking a trifling lapse that befell to-day, notable in itself as illustrating the effect of habit even upon the best trained minds.

ASHLEY turned up as usual with his volume of Mangnall's Questions. They numbered seven, printed consecutively on the paper, and were addressed to NAPOLEON B. HALDANE. Actually, by most liberal computation, there were only three subjects dealt with. But ASHLEY, though comparatively young in years, was not born yesterday. If he followed the ordinary practice of arranging his interrogations on a particular point in form of a single question his opportunities of putting supplementary ones would be limited. Accordingly he cuts them up, making every section serve as a separate enquiry; when the Minister replies, ASHLEY, almost before he has finished, is on his legs with a supplementary question.

This is how, as formerly explained, he easily keeps ahead of Captain CRAIG in the honourable competition for the distinction of putting in a single week the largest number of futile questions.

To-day, his seven questions on the paper having by the process indicated run up to fifteen, he resumed his seat. The next on the paper stood in the name of HICKS-BEACH. But the SPEAKER, having called upon ASHLEY seven successive times, mechanically repeated his name.

ASHLEY up like a shot. Here was a slice of good luck. Having exhausted his own opportunities, he was voluntarily supplied by the SPEAKER with a sixteenth! Hadn't anything ready, but long practice assured him that if he only opened his mouth a question would emerge.

SPEAKER's lapse temporary. Quickly perceiving his error, he called, "Order! Order! Mr. HICKS-BEACH." And the Questions took their proper course.

*Business done.*—Report stage of Miners' Eight Hours Bill.

*Friday.*—A declaration made by Mr. LUPTON in debate on Prevention

TON's address has been looked up and he may expect any night to have opportunity of putting his amiable principle into practice.

The MEMBER FOR SARK notes in the incident a departure from earlier habit. Formerly, when Mr. LUPTON's premises were invaded with felonious intent, he was accustomed to seize the burglar by the wrist and re-vaccinate him. This proved immediately effective and did something to shake the Hon. Member's well-known rooted antipathy to vaccination. He admits that he knows no single instance where a burglar so treated was seen again on the premises. At the same time he denies that lymph, whether drawn directly from the calf or otherwise, did, or could, serve any useful purpose.

To avert inconvenient controversy he has, SARK says, for some years given up his midnight practice. Now, as he announces, if the burglar will only go quietly away, he may take with him what he wants.

*Business done.*—Miners' Eight Hours Bill passed Report stage.



"FAMILY NOTICE OF ANY FURTHER ENQUIRY."

*The Right Hon. Loulou.* "All right, my dear Bob, that's agreed, then. Mind you give me time for my repartees; and, remember, an air of spontaneity is most important. Ta, ta!"

(The Brothers H-re-rt.)

of Crime Bill has created keen interest in certain hives of industry known to the police. Discussing the measure of punishment allotted to burglars, and the probability of its severity leading the midnight visitor to resort to violence in order to escape, Mr. LUPTON remarked that he looked upon the matter from the point of view of "the tax-payer who did not want to be damaged by rough men." For himself he was willing that his goods should be taken away so long as the burglar went off quietly.

That's the sort of man the burglar likes to find on his beat; has every desire to meet the gentleman half-way, even three-quarters. Mr. LU-

"Any purchaser who signs the coupon is entitled to £2,000 at any age over fourteen, if he is fatally killed by himself in his own motor-car."—*The Publisher's Circular*.

People who are fatally killed by themselves at the age of thirteen should therefore wait for a year before claiming the money.

A French contemporary describes the recent violent scenes at the Albert Hall and how the organ played

"O dear! what can the matter be,  
Johnny's not home from the fair":

"L'orgue essaie de noyer le bruit du combat dans ses flots d'harmonie. Il joue la chanson populaire, reprise en cœur par les 10,000 personnes présentes:

"Qu'y a-t-il, ma chère, et que croire?  
Ce Jeanjean s'arrête à la foire,  
La musique n'adoucit pas les meurs."—*Echo de Paris*.

To which we can only say, "Oh, dear!" or, as the French apparently have it, "Ma chère."

Extract from an Agricultural Return made by a very nice-minded woman:

"Wheat . . . 7 acres  
Kohl Rabi : No rabbits  
Sheep . . . 1 father sheep 6 ewes."



*First Trooper (who has been supplied with a sandwich in preparation for field-day). "BLOOMIN' LOT O' GRUB TO LAST TILL SUPPER-TIME, EH?"  
Second ditto. "YUSS, THAT'S WHAT COMES OF ACTIN' AS A SKELETON FORCE."*

#### SCIENCE NOTES.

##### ARE OUR HEADS GROWING BIGGER? (By our Hydrocephalous Expert.)

THE remarkable letter contributed by Dr. BERNARD HOLLANDER to a recent number of *The Westminster Gazette* on the growth of the brain and concomitantly of the skull has caused great excitement in influential circles.

Dr. BERNARD HOLLANDER, who claims the support of two Fellows of the Royal Society, maintains that the skull increases with the growth of the brain, and that the brain continues to grow so long as it is actively exercised. In this tremendous belief he is fortified by the well-authenticated cases of Mr. GLADSTONE and an August Personage. To these cases may be added others which have come within our personal observation.

(1) An illustrious and world-renowned novelist, whose resemblance to a famous Elizabethan dramatist has long been notorious, when he first came to London used to wear a 6½-inch hat. Now no stock size will fit him, and he has to have a con-

stant succession of new and ever-larger hats made for him by the firm of MAGNIFICO POMPOSO in Rome, who build for the POPE and most of the Curia.

But the novelist's expansion has not been confined to his cranium. His finely developed nether man has assumed so much more opulent dimensions of late that he is admittedly too big for his boots of yesteryear.

(2) The peculiar headgear, suggestive of a retired bath-chair proprietor, affected by the youngest member of the Cabinet has caused no little surprise amongst his old brother-officers. But the square-crowned bowler in question is rendered necessary by the extraordinary supra-temporal development of the statesman's head, which presents a most extraordinary resemblance to that of PERICLES (compared by classical writers to a sea-squill), and, growing as it does in direct ratio with his unbridled mental activity, is already beginning to cause lively concern to his devoted and affectionate colleagues. Indeed, we have good reason to believe that Dr. BERNARD HOLLANDER has of his

own initiative volunteered to remove this gigantic cranial dome and supply its place with a low-crowned roof of aluminium, jewelled in six holes. The only other alternative, that the owner of this wonderful osseous envelope should cease entirely from mental activity, is one which his colleagues are quite unable to contemplate without transports of melancholia.

"A woman who can act and think for herself is a treasure indeed."—*Madame.*

That so few of our women can act and can think  
Is a truth which we would not  
endeavour to blink;  
But we hold that a far more regrettable fact  
Is the number of women who think  
they can act.

#### FROM a Vicar's postbag:—

"Dear Sir—I am applying for an old-age pension. I have a dim recollection of being born at Mapledurham in 1829 or 1830. I shall feel duly grateful if you can trace it for me." We do not approve of the use of clergymen as mediums.

## A "RESTING" PART.

[Addressed to the youthful pig that has been selected from 600 candidates to perform in the Pantomime at Drury Lane.]

Not to expose your adolescent tushes,  
Set in a storm-proof smile,  
They brought you to a stage where  
beauty gushes

And fairy scenes beguile;  
Not to enthrall the house with  
breathless stupor  
At gags and garments of an olden  
time,  
But merely as an ordinary super,  
O pig, you play the mime.

Do you lament, perchance, the fame  
that bruited

Your budding charms abroad?  
Sigh for the simple trough where once  
you rooted

With no one to applaud?  
Lived the bucolic life as yet un-  
puzzled

By purple limelight and the mazy  
reel?

Rolled on the straw of indolence, and  
guzzled

The pared potato-peel?

Or have you felt ambition? found  
awaken

Beneath those tender ribs  
A hope (beyond the lot of common  
bacon)

Of far superior cribs?

Have you been told, perhaps, of  
snooty cousins

Who all their prowess to the Muses  
bring,

And rightly pick the same sweet  
names from dozens

Of letters in a ring?

I rather think it: you've a sort of  
glitter

About your beady eye  
That seems to say, "Good Heavens,  
what a litter!"

Why don't they let me try?"

The chorus sings its songs, the jesters  
tumble,

The stars come out in robes of  
shining silk;—

"Not one of these," I think I hear  
you grumble,

"Is worth his buttermilk."

Well, never mind, my porklet!  
there's a beauty

Of nature as of art,  
And some day you shall do your  
Christmas duty

And play the hero's part.  
Thrice-fatted you shall come from  
fields of clover

To triumph in a tragic rôle sublime,  
And wear upon your breast, the last  
act over,  
The epithet of "Prime."

## ON THE SAME THEME.

DEAR SIR.—I do not know whether the poor little pig in the Pantomime has got even a squeaking part or not. I have, however, taken the liberty of writing a little song for him (or is it "her")? and am sending it you in the hope that you will be able to place it in the proper quarter.

There are only six verses. Shall I begin?

## I.

Oh, hear me for a moment, please,  
'tis little "Curly" speaks  
(Surely you've heard of little  
"Curly"?)

They say I am the very finest pig  
that squeaks,

And I've taken to the stage so  
early.

(Chorus: "Curly! " "Curly! ")  
How young to be in such a hurly-  
burly!

You may well ask, "Why, oh,  
why

Did I leave my little sty  
Up in Hali-halifax so early?"

## II.

Whatever made them choose me out  
of all the rest?

Why did they hit on little  
"Curly"?

Was it because they thought my  
temper was the best?

I'm really feeling rather surly.  
(Chorus: "Curly! " "Curly! ")

*Red Riding Hood's* a jolly little  
girlie,

But I do so wish that I  
Hadn't left my little sty  
Up in Hali-halifax so early!

I won't bother you with the other  
four verses at present, but the encore  
verse I am sure you will like. It  
took me much longer than the others,  
and the idea struck me as particularly happy. Here it is:—

(Encore Verse.)

Now I am—  
[One minute, please. Just see if  
you get any applause before you go  
on any further. (Perfect silence.)  
Thank you, that will do.—ED.]

"The total number of Irish persons of over  
seventy is placed by statisticians at 184,000.  
Of these 32,000 are in receipt of poor relief and  
are therefore disqualified, so that there should  
remain 152,000 of the age. The actual number  
of claimants for pensions is, however, 193,000.  
Clearly there must be a mistake somewhere.  
But the means of detecting the error is not  
obvious." —*Daily Mail*.

With great skill we have detected  
another error.  $125 + 32$  is not equal  
to 184. On receipt of a stamped ad-  
dressed envelope we will explain why.

## LEGWEAR DE LUXE.

FAMOUS ACTOR-MANAGER'S PRICELESS  
COLLECTION.

MARVELLOUS as is the Bookman's Paradise of Mr. PIERPONT MORGAN, recently described by the American correspondent of *The Times*, it is but a jejune and pinchbeck exhibition compared with the Saranapalian splendour of the great Sartorial Pleasure Dome of Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER. Hitherto only a few of Mr. ALEXANDER's friends have been admitted to inspect the ineffable glories which lie enshrined within the famous chryselephantine gates, and this is positively the first account that has ever appeared in print of what is undoubtedly the finest collection of legwear in this or any other world. Indeed it has been wittily described as the "Nethermost Heaven of Sartoriculture."

Entering the great gates already alluded to, probably the finest extant specimen of the work of PHEIDIAS, one is struck by a magnificent porphyry cabinet containing a priceless collection of frock-coats dating back to the Noachian epoch. In the centre of the hall, which is hung with green Flemish tapestry, is a superb life-size model of BEAU BRUMMEL. A chalcodony rack in an alcove on the right contains one hundred and twelve clouded canes, while a superb cabinet with crystal doors is all ablaze with scarves of every conceivable hue and pattern.

But the outer hall gives only a faint idea of the indescribable glories of the inner treasure-house, which is exclusively devoted to the choicest specimens of nether integuments. Passing through a lapis-lazuli door one is confronted by a colossal statue of ALEXANDER THE GREAT arrayed in faultless vicuna trousers. A huge wardrobe of ebony and gold illustrates the evolution of this indispensable garment from the primitive *braccae* of the Roman provincial down to the latest creation of Bond Street, arranged in thirty asbestos shelves.

Even more wonderful is the fabulous collection of trouser-stretchers, ranging from the rude stone slabs used by neolithic man to the Gutenberg Trouser Press, the Wynken de Worde Trouser Press, the famous Caxton Trouser Press, and culminating in the marvellous hydraulic press invented by Lord ALTHORP, and capable of reducing the most amorphous leg-wear to absolute symmetry in ten seconds.

Opening out of the main Trouser-Hall is the inmost Sartorial sanctum,

a bomb-proof chamber panelled in platinum and containing the choicest treasures of Mr. ALEXANDER's soul-shaking collection. These are nothing less than a number of historic nether garments worn by famous, notable or notorious personages. To give a complete list would tax our space too severely; but it must be a source of national satisfaction to know that while so many other inestimable relics have crossed the Atlantic it has been the privilege of Mr. ALEXANDER to keep in this country—

1. The favourite pantaloons of "Old Q."
2. A pair of kerseymere knee-breeches worn by WILBERFORCE.
3. A pair of trousers in MARTIN TUPPER's earliest manner.
4. Pair of ditto, worn by the Poet Laureate at the opening of the Crystal Palace.
5. Pair of knickerbockers worn by Mr. HALL CAINE on the occasion of his first speech in the House of Keys.
6. Pair of nainsook pyjamas worn by PORFIRIO DIAZ, the President of Mexico.
7. Pair of check trousers, peg-top pattern, formerly the property of the late Mr. TRACY TURNERELLI.
8. Pair of running shorts worn by DORANDO PIETRI in the Marathon Race.
9. Pair of accordion-pleated bloomers from the wardrobe of the late Dowager-Empress of CHINA.
10. Pair of trews in which ROBERT BURNS composed *Scots wha ha'e*.
11. Pair of Scotch plaid trousers in which CARLYLE wrote the greater part of *Sartor Resartus*.
12. Pair of Carthaginian trouser-loops in which HANNIBAL is believed to have crossed the Alps.

And 13 is a special moth-proof boudoir, which is in reality a steel safe, with three hundred and thirty pairs of trousers worn by Mr. ALEXANDER himself as *Aubrey Tanqueray* during the run of Mr. PINERO'S famous play.

We have said enough to show that to be permitted the privilege of *entrée* to Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER'S collection is a liberal education. Mr. ALEXANDER, with the assistance of the Rev. Dr. KINO, who acts as his chief valet and is Keeper of the Pressed Trousers, has, however, for some time been busily engaged on a *Catalogue raisonné* of his possessions, most sumptuously embellished with facsimile buttons, a few copies of which will be on sale for the general public.



#### TACTLESS GALLANTRY.

*Lady of uncertain age (to old admirer). "WELL, ADMIRAL, HOW DO YOU THINK I'M LOOKING?"*  
*Admiral (who last remembers her with grey hair). "MY DEAR LADY, AT LEAST THIRTY YEARS YOUNGER!"*

#### THE LOAFER.

He is rather small for his age, slim, and with an appearance that one would call "nervy." He does very little for me, but I keep him partly because I have a genuine affection for him, partly because most men in the Temple enjoy the services (such as they are) of one of his class, but mostly because he possesses in a marked degree those two characteristics which go to make the ideal servant—ubiquity and unobtrusiveness. He is always there in case he is wanted, but never in

the way. He is perhaps too modest; but it must also be said that he leads the idlest of lives. His handwriting is so abominable that I cannot entrust my correspondence to him, and if I ask him to do any odd jobs they are usually badly done.

He has the annoying habit of drumming his fingers on tables and desks, a sure sign of the idler. However, although he could hardly be called my right hand in business, I should be genuinely sorry to lose him.

Perhaps I ought to have mentioned at the outset that I am referring to my left hand.

## OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

A DISMAL home; a situation that one would like to call impossible; a woman with the long-suffering strength only weak women possess; a man she has wronged and been wronged by; and her son. These make up the drama of ANNE SEDGWICK's new novel *Amabel Channice* (ARNOLD). The author of *Valerie Upton* has not lost her cunning. Her characters, few but convincing, are alive; though unpleasant, they are real. Yet one may perhaps doubt whether the husband, a man of thirty-two, would have gone about his courting in so paternal a fashion; and the son would be better if he were less of a prig. A young man who analyses the feelings of love by introspection and backs his sentiments with quotations from HEGEL may be as clever as he will, but he is already far on the road to become a bore of the very first water. Miss SEDGWICK ends by leaving him to devote his time to his mother. Probably no other woman whom he came across would think it worth while to disturb the idyll.

As Mr. A. S. M. HUTCHINSON points out, *Once Aboard the Lugger*, taken from that dashing sentiment "Once aboard the lugger and the girl is mine,"

might be considered a generic title for all novels. Certainly there is no specific mention of any lugger in his book (ALSTON RIVERS), excepting in the "Author's Advertisement." But there is specific mention of other things equally good. There is *Mr. Marrapit*, who, according to the eye which beheld him, was like "one of the minor prophets—shaved," and had every inch of his garden searched because a threepenny-piece had been dropped. There is *Mrs. Major*, his companion, that masterly woman. There are *George* and his *Mary*, the people of the story, and very nice people, too—particularly *Mary*. And many more, from *Mr. David Bruner*, detective, to *The Rose of Sharon*, cat. They are all cleverly drawn, and for the most part sufficiently true to life to compel belief in them, however preposterous the circumstances in which the author's very pleasant humour lands them.

The Story of the Man in the Iron Mask holds its own among the world's mysteries. Since VOLTAIRE'S time, it has been discussed by a shifting company of writers who have devoted an appreciable portion of their

lives to hunting up trails. The latest and by no means the least weighty contribution to the solution of the problem is from the pen of Monseigneur Barnes. The title of the book, *The Man of the Mask* (SMITH, ELDER), is significant. Amongst other discoveries, Monseigneur has come upon the fact that the mask was not of iron, but of velvet. The wearing of it was not an addition to punishment, but merely a means of preventing recognition. Various persons have been named by earlier explorers as being the masked prisoner. That he was a twin-brother of LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH was a dramatic fancy that long moved the world. A better reasoned though less picturesque explanation pointed to MATTHIOLI, agent of the Duke of MANTUA, who got the better of LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH in a secret treaty for the purchase of the fortress of Casale. Monseigneur Barnes has a novel theory to advance. Behind the velvet mask he sees the face of a son of

CHARLES THE SECOND, the issue of a liaison with a Jersey lady of good family. The theory is supported by the marshalling of much evidence and the exercise of considerable dialectical ingenuity.

To the thousands whose thoughts at this season are busy with children no better service can be done than to commend to them *The Modern Child* (FOULIS), compiled by HERVEY ELWES. It is an anthology of verse and prose about children, but it is some-



EXPLODED REPUTATIONS.—IV.

NIMROD.

thing more, too, than a mere anthology. It is informed with a definite purpose to present the innumerable, wayward, graceful, joyous, sorrowful, and even the mischievously playful aspects of a child's nature. Thought and understanding, and, what is even more important, a serious and delightful tenderness, have gone to the making of this pleasant half-crown's worth. Many writers have been laid under contribution, and all of them, I may say, are benefited by their inclusion in Mr. ELWES's list. Every extract has its place in the general scheme as containing some thought that throws light upon its subject. Mrs. ALLEN HARKER's "Foreword" strikes exactly the right note—though by a venial lapse she robs the late Mr. WAUGH of his true name BENJAMIN, and presents him as the Reverend ARTHUR WAUGH. I am sure the real Mr. ARTHUR WAUGH cannot feel aggrieved at this added imputation of excellence. At any rate Mrs. HARKER makes no mistake in her pretty reference to Mr. Punch. Mr. Punch loves children, and on his behalf I make bold to urge all other lovers of children and students of their ways to become possessors of *The Modern Child*.